



THE
CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. T O W N,

CRITIC and CENSOR-GENERAL.

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— — *Commotâ fervet plebecula bile.*

PERS.



SHALL this day present my readers with a letter which I have received from my cousin VILLAGE; who, as I informed them in my first paper, has undertaken to send me an account of every thing remarkable that passes in the country.

DEAR COUSIN,

I HAVE not been unmindful of the province which you was pleased to allot me; but the whole country has been lately so much taken up with the business of Elections, that nothing has fallen under my notice, but debates, squabbles, and drunken rencounters. The spirit of party

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prevails so universally, that the very children are instructed to list out the names of the favourite chiefs of each faction; and I have more than once been in danger of being knocked off my horse, as I rode peaceably on, because I did not declare with which party I sided, though I knew nothing at all of either. Every petty village abounds with the most profound statesmen: it is common to see our rustic politicians assembling after sermon, and settling the good of their country across a tomb-stone, like so many *Dictators from the plough*; and every cottage can boast its patriot, who, like the old *Roman*, would not exchange his turnip for a bribe.

I AM at present in —, where the election is just coming on, and the whole town consequently in an uproar. They have for several parliaments returned two members, who recommended themselves by constantly opposing the court: but there came down a few days ago a banker from *London*, who has offered himself a candidate, and is backed with the most powerful of all interests, money. Nothing has been since thought of but feasting and revelling; and both parties strive to outdo each other in the frequency and expence of their entertainments. This indeed is the general method made use of to gain the favour of electors, and manifest a zeal for the constitution. I have known a candidate depend more upon the strength of his liquor than his arguments; and the merits of a treat has often recommended a member, who has had no merits of his own; for it is certain, that people, however they may differ in other points, are unanimous in promoting the grand business of eating and drinking.

IT is impossible to give a particular account of the various disorders occasioned by the contest in this town. The
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streets ring with the different cry of each party, and every hour produces a ballad, a set of queries, or a serious address to the worthy electors. I have seen the Mayor with half the Corporation roaring, hollowing, and reeling along the streets, and yet threatening to clap a poor fellow in the stocks for making the same noise, only because he would not vote as they do. It is no wonder that the strongest connexions should be broken, and the most intimate friends set at variance, through their difference of opinion. Not only the men, but their wives also are engaged in the same quarrel. Mr. *Staunch* the haberdasher used to smoke his pipe constantly in the same kitchen-corner every evening at the same alehouse with his neighbour Mr. *Veer* the chandler, while their ladies chatted together at the street-door: but now the husbands never speak to each other; and consequently Mrs. *Veer* goes a quarter of a mile for her inkle and tape, rather than deal at Mr. *Staunch's* shop; and Mrs. *Staunch* declares, she would go without her tea, though she has always been used to it twice a day, rather than fetch her half quartern from that turn-coat *Veer's*.

WHEREVER Politics are introduc'd, Religion is always drawn into the quarrel. The town I have been speaking of is divided into two parties, who are distinguish'd by the appellation of *Christians* and *Jews*. The *Jews*, it seems, are those, who are in the interest of a nobleman who gave his vote for passing the *Jew-bill*, and are held in abomination by the *Christians*. The zeal of the latter is still further inflamed by the vicar, who every Sunday thunders out his anathemas, and preaches up the pious doctrine of persecution. In this he is seconded by the clerk, who is careful to enforce the arguments from the pulpit by selecting staves proper for the occasion.

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THIS truly *Christian* spirit is no where more manifest than at their public feasts. I was at one of their dinners, where I found great variety of pig-meat was provided. The table was covered from one end to the other with hams, legs of pork, spare-ribs, griskins, haslets, feet and ears, brawn, and the like: in the middle there smoaked a large barbicued hog, which was soon devour'd to the bone; so desirous was every one to prove his *Christianity* by the quantity he could swallow of that *Anti-Judaic* food. After dinner there was brought in, by way of desert, a dish of hogs puddings; but as I have a dislike to that kind of diet, (though not from any scruple of conscience,) I was regarded as little better than a *Jew* for declining to eat of them.

THE great support of this party is an old neighbouring knight; who, ever since the late naturalization-act, has conceived a violent antipathy to the *Jews*, and takes every opportunity of railing at the above-mentioned nobleman. Sir Rowland swears that his lordship is worse than *Judas*, that he is actually circumcised, and that the chapel in this nobleman's house is turned into a synagogue. The knight had never been seen in a church, 'till the late clamour about the *Jew*-bill; but he now attends it regularly every Sunday, where he devoutly takes his nap all the service; and he lately bestowed the best living in his gift, which he had before promised to his chaplain, on one whom he had never seen, but had read his name in the title-page to a sermon against the *Jews*. He turned off his butler, who had lived with him many years, and whose only crime was a swarthy complexion, because the dog looked like a *Jew*. He feeds hogs in his park and the court-yard, and has Guinea-pigs in his parlour. Every Saturday he has an hunt, because it is the *Jewish* sabbath; and in the evening he
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is sure to get drunk with the vicar in defence of religion. As he is in the commission, he ordered a poor *Jew* pedlar, who came to hawk goods at his house, to *Bridewell*; and he was once going to send a little parish-boy to the same place, for presuming to play in his worship's hearing on that unchristian-like instrument the *Jews-Harp*.

THE fair sex here are no less ambitious of displaying their affection for the same cause, and they manifest their sentiments by the colour and fashion of their dress. Their zeal more particularly shews itself in a variety of posies for rings, buckles, knots, and garters. I observed the other night at the assembly, that the ladies seemed to vie with each other in hanging out the ensigns of their faith in orthodox ribbands, bearing the inscription of NO JEWS, CHRISTIANITY FOR EVER. They likewise wore little crosses at their breasts; their *pompons* were formed into crucifixes, their knots disposed in the same angles, and so many parts of their habits moulded into that shape, that the whole assembly looked like the court on St. *Andrew's* day. It was remarkable that the vicar's lady, who is a thorough-paced High-Churchwoman, was more religious in the decorations of her dress than any of the company: in a word, she was so stuck over from head to foot with crosses, that a wag justly compared her to an old *Popish* tomb-stone in a *Gothic* cathedral.

I SHALL now conclude my letter with the relation of an adventure, that happened to myself at my first coming into this town. I intended to put up at the *Catherine-Wheel*, as I had often used the house before, and knew the landlord to be a good civil kind of fellow. I accordingly turned my horse into the yard, when to my great surprize the landlord, as soon as he saw me, gave me an hearty

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curse, and told me I might go about my business, "for indeed he would not entertain any such rascals." Upon this he said something to two or three strapping country-fellows, who immediately came towards me, and if I had not rode away directly, I should have met with a very rough salutation from their horse-whips. I could not imagine what offence I had committed, that could give occasion for such ill usage, 'till I heard the master of the inn hollowing after me "that's the scoundrel that came here some time ago with *Tom T'other-side*;" who, I have since learnt, is an agent for the other party.

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I am, dear Cousin,

Yours, &c.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE beginning of next Month will be performed at *Covent-Garden Theatre*, a new Dramatic Satire in two Acts called

THE CONJURER.

The Public are desired to take Notice, that this Entertainment, though it is mimical, is not pantomimical; and that *The CONJURER* is no Relation to *The NECROMANCER* or *The SORCERER*.